

UP154

24 July 1981

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AM-CASEY 1STLD-PICKUPTHGRAF 7-24

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(CASEY, JACKSON, REAGAN COMMENT)

BY IRA R. ALLEN

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- WITH SENATE PRESSURE FOR HIS IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION MOUNTING, CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM CASEY INSISTED FRIDAY THE FACTS WILL SHOW HE IS "QUALIFIED AND READY" FOR THE POST. PRESIDENT REAGAN REITERATED HIS "CONFIDENCE" IN HIS FORMER CAMPAIGN MANAGER.

ASSISTANT GOP LEADER TED STEVENS OF ALASKA AND ANOTHER RANKING REPUBLICAN SENATOR JOINED SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BARRY GOLDWATER OF ARIZONA IN CALLING ON CASEY TO RESIGN ON GROUNDS HE HAS COMPROMISED HIS SENSITIVE POSITION -- AND WITH IT, THE CIA.

"I DON'T THINK THE AGENCY IS THAT FRAGILE," CASEY SAID. "I FEEL WHEN ALL THE FACTS ARE OUT IT WILL BE CLEAR I AM QUALIFIED AND READY TO LEAD THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY."

CASEY TALKED TO REPORTERS AFTER MEETING FOR 30 MINUTES WITH SEN. HENRY JACKSON, D-WASH., A MEMBER OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE, WHICH IS INVESTIGATING CASEY'S BUSINESS DEALINGS AND HIS CONTROVERSIAL APPOINTMENT OF THE SINCE-DEPARTED MAX HUGEL AS HEAD OF COVERT OPERATIONS.

"WE STILL HAVE CONFIDENCE," REAGAN TOLD REPORTERS WHILE TOURING AN ART MUSEUM FRIDAY AFTERNOON. IT WAS THE FOURTH TIME DURING THE DAY THAT HE OR A WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN VOICED HIS SUPPORT FOR CASEY.

BUT THE PRESIDENT DECLINED TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO STAND BY THE VERDICT OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE, WHICH WILL MEET TUESDAY TO REVIEW A STAFF REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION.

"I DON'T SAY WE'LL DO THAT, BUT WE'LL CERTAINLY TALK TO THEM," REAGAN SAID. "AS I SAY, WE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MR. CASEY."

STEVENS WARNED THAT IF THE ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO BACK CASEY, THE EMBARRASSMENT IT WOULD SUFFER "COULD BE SUBSTANTIAL."

"ADDITIONAL MATTERS" HAVE COME TO LIGHT THAT BOTHER SENATORS ON THE COMMITTEE, STEVENS SAID.

THE WHITE HOUSE DISAGREED. COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR DAVID GERGEN SAID THE PRESIDENT'S COUNSEL, FRED FIELDING, HAD BEEN "MONITORING" INFORMATION SUBMITTED TO THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE AND FOUND "THERE IS NOTHING THERE" THAT WOULD BE DETERIMENTAL TO CASEY.

CASEY, TRYING TO DEFUSE THE CONTROVERSY, CALLED GOLDWATER AT 2:30 A.M. AND ENGAGED IN WHAT SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER HOWARD BAXER LATER CALLED A "VERY ENERGETIC CONVERSATION." CASEY THEN TRIED TO MEET WITH GOLDWATER FRIDAY AFTERNOON BUT THE SENATOR WAS UNAVAILABLE.

JACKSON ALSO STOOD BEHIND CASEY AND SAID HE IS CONFIDENT THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE WILL INVITE CASEY TO PRESENT HIS SIDE EARLY NEXT WEEK "SO HE CAN HAVE HIS DAY IN COURT."

COMPLAINING THAT CASEY WAS BEING "TRIED IN THE PRESS AND THAT'S NOT THE WAY WE DO IT," JACKSON SAID, "CERTAINLY HE OUGHT TO STAY."

CASEY ALSO MET FOR 20 MINUTES WITH BAXER AND WENT TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

A CORPORATION LAWYER LONG ACTIVE IN REPUBLICAN POLITICS, CASEY, 68, SERVED DURING WORLD WAR II AS CHIEF OF SECRET INTELLIGENCE IN THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES, WHICH LATER BECAME THE CIA. HE HAS HELD THREE HIGH GOVERNMENT POSTS PREVIOUSLY AND WAS MANAGER OF REAGAN'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

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AM-CASEY INSERT7THGRRF-PICKUPBTHGRAF1STLD 7-24
(GOLDWATER OFFERS COUNSEL POST FO WATERGATE LAWYER)

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GOLDWATER, MEANWHILE, OFFERED FRED THOMPSON, REPUBLICAN COUNSEL TO THE 1973 SENATE WATERGATE COMMITTEE, THE JOB AS SPECIAL COUNSEL TO HIS COMMITTEE FOR ITS INVESTIGATION OF CASEY. A SPOKESMAN FOR SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER HOWARD BAKER, R-TENN., SAID THOMPSON PLANNED TO NOTIFY GOLDWATER OF HIS DECISION MONDAY.

THOMPSON, A NASHVILLE, TENN., LAWYER WITH CLOSE TIES TO BAKER, SERVED AS COUNSEL TO THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE EARLIER THIS YEAR WHEN IT INVESTIGATED THE BACKGROUND OF SECRETARY OF STATE ALEXANDER HAIG FOR HIS CONFIRMATION HEARINGS.

PICKUP &THGRRF: STEVENS WARNED
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